

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
for the
Eastern District of Michigan

United States of America

v.

Cordell J. James

Case No. Case: 2:21-mj-30603
Assigned To : Unassigned
Assign. Date : 12/31/2021
USA V. JAMES (CMP)(CMC)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of December 31, 2021 in the county of Wayne in the
Eastern District of Michigan, the defendant(s) violated:

<i>Code Section</i>	<i>Offense Description</i>
18 U.S.C. 111	Assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers or employees
18 U.S.C. 1708	Theft or receipt of stolen mail
18 U.S.C. 2114	Robbery of mail, money, or other property of the United States

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:
See attached AFFIDAVIT.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence
and/or by reliable electronic means.

Date: December 31, 2021

City and state: Detroit, Michigan



Complainant's signature

Nicholas B. Olesen, U.S. Postal Inspector (USPIS)

Printed name and title



Judge's signature

Hon. Kimberly G. Altman, United States Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

AFFIDAVIT

I, Nicholas B. Olesen, being duly sworn, depose and state the following:

1. I am a United States Postal Inspector and have been employed as such for approximately twenty years. As a United States Postal Inspector, I have received training concerning investigations involving violations of federal law, including cases related to mail fraud, mail theft, the mailing of illicit narcotics, as well as robberies and burglaries of postal employees and/or facilities. The facts set forth below are based upon my own personal knowledge, as well as information obtained from witnesses, documents, photographs, other law enforcement personnel, and other evidence. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of securing an arrest warrant, I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. I have set forth only the facts that I believe establish a violation of federal law.
2. On December 31, 2021, I received a phone call from Postal Inspector Chad Liersch regarding a robbery of a United States Postal Service (USPS) letter carrier which had occurred at approximately 10:15 am that same day. The letter carrier was reportedly robbed, at gunpoint, near XX92 Bewick Street, Detroit, MI, of approximately 15 pieces of U.S.

Mail and one USPS package. The suspect was driving a white, older model Chevrolet Trailblazer and was described as possibly being a black male, wearing a construction vest and a ski mask.

3. On the same date, I responded to the Mary McCoy Post Office (aka Jefferson Station), 10721 Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, MI, the office to which the victim letter carrier is assigned. Upon my arrival, I met with and interviewed Letter Carrier Victim 1 (hereinafter Victim 1), who provided the following information:
 - a. On December 31, 2021, at approximately 10:15 am, Victim 1 was seated in his parked mail truck in front of XX42 Bewick. (The initial report of XX92 Bewick was incorrect.) As he was preparing to exit the truck to deliver mail, he noticed a white Chevy Trailblazer pull up behind him. The driver of the Trailblazer exited his vehicle, walked to the driver's side of Victim 1's mail truck, pointed a handgun at Victim 1, told him to exit the truck, put his hands up, and walk through the field located across the street from XX42 Bewick. The suspect also told Victim 1 not to look back or he would shoot Victim 1 in the heart. Victim 1 complied with all the suspect's directions and walked to a nearby residence, XXX2 Hubbard, where

he asked a male resident to call 911 because he had been robbed.

Victim 1 did not have his cell phone because it was still in the mail truck. The man called 911, and Detroit Police Department (DPD) officers responded. According to Victim 1, the suspect was a black male in his 30's, who was 5'1" or 5'2" tall with a medium build and spoke with a Jamaican or African accent. The suspect wore a black ski mask, black jeans, brown work boots, a bright orange construction vest with reflectors, and a brownish coat under the vest. Victim 1 thought the handgun was a Glock 9mm, which the suspect held in his left hand. In Victim 1's estimation, the suspect stole 15 to 20 pieces of U.S. Mail and one USPS parcel, as well as a gray cloth pouch in which Victim 1 keeps quarters to do his laundry; he estimated the pouch contained approximately \$50 in quarters. Victim 1 said the right front fender of the suspect's Trailblazer stood out because it was black.

4. Also, on December 31, 2021, Task Force Officer (TFO) Rick Arslanian, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), advised Postal Inspectors that the suspect was in DPD custody following a lengthy high-speed chase.

5. On the same date, Inspector Karl Hansen and I met TFO Arslanian at the DPD's 9th Precinct. While there, Inspector Hansen and I met with DPD officers who were involved in the vehicular chase and ultimate arrest of the suspect, Cordell James (DOB xx/xx/1994). They related the circumstances of James' arrest to Inspectors. According to officers, at the time of his arrest, James was bare-chested, but he was wearing black jeans and brown work boots. James is a black male, age 27, 5'3" to 5'4" tall. Located inside of the white Trailblazer, which James was driving throughout the chase, was a USPS mail satchel which contained approximately 26 pieces of mail, some of which had been rifled, some loose cash, and a gray cloth pouch, which appeared to contain approximately \$50 in quarters. Also recovered from the vehicle driven by James were a black USPS stocking cap, James' cell phone, and a black 9mm Taurus handgun with an extended magazine; a round was in the chamber when the weapon was recovered by police in the vehicle's glove box. Also, James' three-year-old daughter was seated in the front seat of the Trailblazer for the duration of his high-speed attempt at eluding police. Based on a statement she made to police following her father's arrest ("Daddy robbed the mailman."), it is believed she was also in the Trailblazer during James' armed robbery of Victim 1. One of

the officers who was on scene at the time of James' arrest confirmed that the right front fender of the otherwise white Trailblazer was black.

6. On the same date, TFO Arslanian and I went to the Detroit Detention Center to interview James. Prior to being interviewed, James was advised of his Miranda Rights by Inspector Olesen. During the interview, James provided the following information:

- a. James said "they"—his grandfather, James, and Otiga, whom he described as Bobby Lee James' wife—told him to rob the mail man. James admitted to robbing the mailman on Bewick. "They" told him to take "shit." James said he took a blue "UPS" bag and "a couple of papers." He told the mail man to go into the woods. This was his first robbery. When asked if he told the mail man that he would shoot him if he looked back at James, James nodded his head yes. He admitted to holding the gun in his hand when he was talking to the mail man. When asked what "they" told him to get from the mail man, James said a box for XXX0 Garland. According to Victim 1, the parcel which was stolen from his truck was addressed to XXX0 Hurlbut. (Garland is the street immediately to the east of Bewick, and Hurlbut is the street immediately to the west of

Bewick.) James admitted to purchasing the handgun at Action Impact approximately two weeks before Christmas.

7. Based upon the above facts, I assert that probable cause exists to believe that Cordell James did, knowingly assault a person having lawful charge, control, or custody of any mail matter or other property of the United States, with intent to rob, steal, or purloin such mail matter, money or other property of the United States, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2114; did unlawfully have in his possession mail or any article contained therein, which has been stolen or abstracted, knowing the same to have been stolen or abstracted, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1708; and did forcibly assault a USPS Letter Carrier while engaged in the performance of official duties, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 111.



Nicholas B. Olesen
U.S. Postal Inspector

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence
and/or by reliable electronic means.



Kimberly G. Altman
United States Magistrate Judge

Dated: December 31, 2021